

## Patient information factsheet

# Adult congenital heart service: cardiac MRI scan

We have written this factsheet to give you more information about a cardiac MRI scan. It explains what a cardiac MRI scan is and what the procedure involves. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us.

### What is a cardiac MRI scan?

A cardiac MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan uses magnetic and radio waves to build a picture of your heart.

This type of scan is particularly helpful for people with a congenital heart problem (the condition is present at birth).

The scan helps your cardiologist (specialist heart doctor) to see the structure of your heart, as well as check the valves and main blood vessels, such as the aorta and pulmonary artery. It also provides information about the heart muscle and function.

The scan provides very clear pictures that will help your cardiologist make a diagnosis and plan your treatment.

### The procedure

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown and remove any metal you are wearing, such as jewellery or body piercings. We will attach some ECG stickers (electrodes) to you and ask you to lie on a flat bed. We will place a buzzer in your hand so you will be able to get our attention while in the scanner, if required. Finally, we will place headphones over your ears.

The bed will then move slowly inside the tunnel-shaped scanner, which is open at both ends. We will ask you through the headphones to lie as still as possible while the scan takes place. During the scan, the radiographer (the person operating the scanner) will ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds and then breathe normally.

The scan usually takes between 20 and 40 minutes, but the whole procedure can last up to an hour. You can press the buzzer in your hand at any time if you need to speak to the radiographer. Please note, the scanner is quite noisy; you will hear banging and knocking sounds but this is normal.

For some cardiac MRI scans, the radiologist (doctor) will use a dye known as contrast to highlight images of the blood flow to and from your heart. If your cardiologist has requested that you have contrast dye in your scan, we will place a small cannula (thin tube) into a vein in your arm before the MRI starts.

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## Possible complications

An MRI scan is considered to be an extremely safe procedure. If you suffer from claustrophobia (fear of confined spaces), please discuss this with your cardiologist before the scan. Generally there are no side effects from having an injection of contrast.

## After the procedure

The consultant cardiac radiologist will examine all the images in detail after you have left the department and write a report to your consultant cardiologist. The images and this report will be reviewed at a multidisciplinary team meeting, particularly in cases where a procedure or operation is being considered.

You will receive a letter about your test results when the medical team have fully interpreted your results.

## Contact us

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact us.

Adult congenital heart clinical nurse specialists

Telephone: **023 8120 4739**

Hospital switchboard

Telephone: **023 8077 7222** then ask for **bleep 1481**

Email: **ACHDliaisonteam@uhs.nhs.uk**

## Useful links

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/congenital-heart-disease](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/congenital-heart-disease)

For a translation of this document, or a version in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **023 8120 4688**.

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **[www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalneeds](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalneeds)**